

1. A method of acquiring a list of prospective customers over a computer network, the prospective customer list including one or more attributes for each prospective customer on the list, the method comprising:

receiving the location of the list on the computer network from a client system,  
identifying the initial format of the list,  
retrieving the list from the location on the computer network,  
formatting the list for storage in a database of prospective customer lists, the  
formatting facilitating searching and retrieval of the list and data included therein from the  
database, and  
storing the formatted list in the database of prospective customer lists.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising

receiving from the client system descriptive data concerning the list, and  
storing the descriptive data in the database.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the descriptive data comprises at least one of a name  
for the list, a description of the attributes included in the list, and a privacy policy for the list.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of formatting comprises  
identifying the attributes included in the list received from the client system,  
comparing the identified attributes with database attributes, each database attribute  
being pre-defined by the database of prospective customer lists and having a pre-defined  
format.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising

transforming the format of an identified attribute into the format of a database  
attribute if a match is determined between an identified attribute and a database attribute.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising

creating a new database attribute for an identified attribute if no match is determined  
between the identified attribute and a database attribute.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of creating a database attribute comprises  
specifying the name and the type of the new database attribute.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of formatting comprises analyzing one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of formatting comprises analyzing one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of formatting comprises analyzing one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of formatting comprises analyzing one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute, and the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising publishing the availability of the list from the database for purchase by a list purchaser.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of publishing comprises including the list in a catalog of prospective customer lists available on the database.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining usage instructions for the customer list, the usage instructions controlling the distribution and use of the customer list by a purchaser of the list from the database.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the usage instructions for the customer list are received from the client system.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the usage instructions restrict the purchase of the customer list from the database to specific list purchasers.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the usage instructions restrict the number of times the customer list can be used by a list purchaser.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the usage instructions specify that the list is to be delivered to a third party other than the list purchaser.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising  
determining the pricing instructions for the list, the pricing instructions specifying the cost of the list to a purchaser of the list from the database.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the pricing instructions are received from the client system.

21. A computer-readable storage medium encoded with processing instructions for directing a computer to:  
receive a network location of a list of prospective customers from a client system connected to the computer over a computer network, the prospective customer list including one or more attributes for each prospective customer on the list,  
identify the initial format of the list,  
retrieve the list from the location on the computer network,  
format the list for storage in a database of prospective customer lists, the format facilitating searching and retrieval of the list and the data included therein from the database, and  
store the formatted list in the database of prospective customer lists.

22. The storage medium of claim 21, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to  
request from the client system descriptive data concerning the list, and  
store the descriptive data in the database.

23. The storage medium of claim 22, wherein the descriptive data comprises at least one of a name for the list, a description of the attributes included in the list, and a privacy policy for the list.

24. The storage medium of claim 21, wherein formatting the list for storage in the database further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to identify the attributes included in the list received from the client system, and compare the identified attributes with database attributes, each database attribute being pre-defined by the database of prospective customer lists, each database attribute having a pre-defined format.

25. The storage medium of claim 24, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to transform the format of an identified attribute into the format of a database attribute if a match is determined between an identified attribute and a database attribute.

26. The storage medium of claim 24, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to create a new database attribute for an identified attribute if no match is determined between the identified attribute and a database attribute.

27. The storage medium of claim 26, wherein creating a new database attribute further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to specify the name and the type of the new database attribute.

28. The storage medium of claim 21, wherein formatting the list for storage in the database further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to analyze one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute.

29. The storage medium of claim 21, wherein formatting the list for storage in the database further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to analyze one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute.

30. The storage medium of claim 21, wherein formatting the list for storage in the database further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to

analyze one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

31. The storage medium of claim 21, wherein formatting the list for storage in the database further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to analyze one or more attributes of the list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute, and the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

32. The storage medium of claim 21, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to publish the availability of the list from the database for purchase by a list purchaser.

33. The storage medium of claim 32, wherein publishing the list further comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to include the list in a catalog of prospective customer lists available on the database.

34. The storage medium of claim 21, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to determine usage instructions for the customer list, the usage instructions controlling the distribution and use of the customer list by a purchaser of the list from the database.

35. The storage medium of claim 34, wherein the usage instructions for the customer list are received from the client system.

36. The storage medium of claim 34, wherein the usage instructions restrict the purchase of the customer list from the database to specific list purchasers.

37. The storage medium of claim 34, wherein the usage instructions restrict the number of times the customer list can be used by a list purchaser.

38. The storage medium of claim 34, wherein the usage instructions restrict the list to delivery to a party other than the list purchaser.

39. The storage medium of claim 21, further comprising processing instructions for directing the computer to

determine the pricing instructions for the list, the pricing instructions specifying the cost of the list to a purchaser of the list from the database.

40. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein the pricing instructions are received from the client system.

41. A method of modifying a list of prospective customers stored in a database of prospective customer lists in a network environment, the database being stored in memory coupled to a computer system, the prospective customer list including initial prospect data for each prospective customer on the list and initial list data describing the list, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a client system to update the list, the client system being connected to the computer system over a computer network,

retrieving the list from the database,

receiving modified data for the list from a location on the computer network,

updating the list to include the modified data, and

storing the updated list in the database.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the request from the client system identifies the location of the modified data on the computer network.

43. The method of claim 41, wherein modified data comprises modified prospect data and the step of updating comprises

replacing the initial prospect data with the modified prospect data.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the initial prospect data is completely replaced by the modified prospect data.

45. The method of claim 41, wherein the modified data comprises new prospect data and the step of updating comprises

adding the new prospect data to the initial prospect data.

46. The method of claim 41, wherein the modified data comprises modified list data and the step of updating comprises  
replacing the initial list data with the modified list data.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the modified list data comprises at least one of data describing content of the list, data concerning the price of the list, data concerning the use of the list, and data concerning the delivery of the list to a list purchaser.

48. The method of claim 41, wherein the modified data comprises new list data and the step of updating comprises  
replacing the initial list data with the new list data.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the new list data comprises at least one of data describing content of the list, data concerning the price of the list, data concerning the use of the list, and data concerning the delivery of the list to a list purchaser.

50. A system for implementing a computerized prospect list service, the system comprising:  
a server computer hosting a prospect list service accessible via client system to a plurality of prospect list managers and a plurality of list purchasers,  
a database of information concerning prospect lists available from a plurality of list managers,  
the prospect list service including a user interface comprising controls whereby a list manager submits a list of prospects for storage in the database, the prospect list service being available via a computer network to assist a list manager in offering a prospect list for sale to a plurality of list purchasers.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein the user interface further comprises controls whereby a list manager identifies the location on the computer network of the prospect list for submission.

52. The system of claim 51, wherein the server computer is operable to retrieve the prospect list from the identified location on the computer network.

53. The system of claim 50, wherein the user interface further comprises controls whereby a list manager submits descriptive data concerning the prospect list for submission and wherein the server computer is operable to store the descriptive data in the database.

54. The system of claim 53, wherein the descriptive data comprises at least one of a name for the prospect list, a description of the attributes included in the prospect list, and a privacy policy for the prospect list.

55. The system of claim 50, wherein the server is operable to format the submitted prospect list for storage in the database, the formatting facilitating the search and retrieval of the submitted prospect list from the database.

56. The system of claim 55, wherein the submitted prospect list includes one or more attributes for each prospect on the list and the formatting of the prospect list includes identifying the attributes included in the prospect list, comparing the identified attributes with database attributes, each database attribute being pre-defined by the database of prospect lists and having a pre-defined format.

57. The system of claim 56, wherein the formatting further comprises transforming the format of an identified attribute into the format of a database attribute if a match is determined between an identified attribute and a database attribute.

58. The system of claim 56, wherein the formatting further comprises creating a new database attribute for an identified attribute if no match is determined between the identified attribute and a database attribute.

59. The system of claim 58, wherein creating a database attribute comprises specifying the name and the type of the new database attribute.

60. The system of claim 55, wherein the submitted prospect list includes one or more attributes for each prospect on the list and the formatting of the prospect list includes analyzing one or more attributes of the prospect list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute.

61. The system of claim 55, wherein the submitted prospect list includes one or more attributes for each prospect on the list and the formatting of the prospect list includes analyzing one or more attributes of the prospect list to determine, for each attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute.

62. The system of claim 55, wherein the submitted prospect list includes one or more attributes for each prospect on the list and the formatting of the prospect list includes analyzing one or more attributes of the prospect list to determine, for each attribute, the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

63. The system of claim 55, wherein the submitted prospect list includes one or more attributes for each prospect on the list and the formatting of the prospect list includes analyzing one or more attributes of the prospect list to determine, for each attribute, the range of data values for the attribute, the frequency of data values for the attribute, and the number of distinct data values for the attribute.

64. The system of claim 50, wherein the prospect list service publishes, via the computer network, the availability of a submitted prospect list for purchase by a list purchaser.

65. The system of claim 64, wherein publishing comprises including the list in a catalog of prospective customer lists available on the database, wherein in the catalog is accessible via the computer network to a plurality of list purchasers.

66. The system of claim 50, wherein the prospect list service determines usage instructions for a submitted list, the usage instructions controlling the distribution and use of the prospect list by a list purchaser.

67. The system of claim 66, wherein the user interface further comprises controls whereby a list manager identifies the usage instructions for a submitted prospect list.

68. The system of claim 66, wherein the usage instructions restrict the purchase of a submitted prospect list to specific list purchasers.

69. The system of claim 66, wherein the usage instructions restrict the number of times a submitted prospect list can be used by a list purchaser.

70. The system of claim 66, wherein the usage instructions specify that a submitted prospect list is to be delivered to a third party other than the list purchaser.

71. The system of claim 50, wherein the prospect list service determines pricing instructions for a submitted prospect list, the pricing instructions specifying the cost of the prospect list to a list purchaser.

72. The system of claim 71, wherein the user interface further comprises controls whereby a list manager specifies the pricing instructions for a submitted prospect list.

09/06/010